

responded with his own letter on July 27.⁵²² Ducheneaux thanked Mercer for his “card regarding the [Hudson] decision,” and noted the gratitude of the Minnesota tribes to Mercer and Fowler for their “assistance in advising the President and the Secretary on this matter.”⁵²³

Fowler and his DNC staff solicited further Native American involvement with the DNC in the late summer and early fall of 1995, at the same time that the DNC stepped up its efforts to secure contributions from that community. Fowler met with Indian leaders on at least three separate occasions in September and October 1995,⁵²⁴ and tribal leaders attended a number of additional meetings at Interior and the White House on various legislative and policy concerns which were coordinated in part by DNC staff. One of Fowler’s meetings was specifically with leaders of gaming tribes, who were concerned about proposed taxation of Indian gaming revenues. During that same time, the DNC began receiving substantial contributions from tribes that had opposed the Hudson application, some of which were contributing to the DNC for the first time.

Mercer’s boss, DNC Finance Director Richard Sullivan, was not surprised to see Indian contributions that fall. Sullivan recalled a Finance staff meeting during either the spring or

⁵²²No copy of such a card from Mercer to Ducheneaux was produced in this investigation. Mercer denies that he sent follow-up notes to the various tribes and lobbyists after the decision in July 1995, and questions whether he even sent one to Ducheneaux, notwithstanding Ducheneaux’s reply letter.

⁵²³Ducheneaux also proposed a further action – this time concerning pending legislation – which the White House could take at that time on another matter “which would cement the support of the tribes to the Administration.” This investigation did not pursue the outcome of Ducheneaux’s request on this collateral matter, and there was no evidence in the available record of any improper communications by the DNC on this issue.

⁵²⁴Fowler also met with Pequot leaders on Nov. 13, 1995, to hear of that tribe’s concerns with pending Indian issues, and to ask the tribe to renew its \$250,000 support to the DNC.